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NIXON QUESTIONS ATOMIC STRATEGY

Top Aides See Soviet Gains
Peril Deterrence Stance

By WILLIAM BEECHER

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 19—The basic strategy by which the United States has long hoped to deter nuclear war is being questioned by President Nixon and some of his top national-security advisers.

Senior officials say privately that, unless the Soviet build-up of strategic missiles and submarines can be halted soon in an arms-control agreement, the Russians could be in a position to wipe out, in a first strike, two of the three pillars of the United States nuclear deterrent—Minuteman missiles and B-52 bombers.

Such capability, these officials hold, could undermine the philosophy of deterrence that the United States has followed during much of the nuclear age.

If the situation is allowed to develop, analysts say, the Soviet Union might expect the United States to adjust to the new balance of power and, for example, back off from some future Middle East confrontation as the Russians did in the 1962 confrontation over their missiles in Cuba.

For years American strategists have relied on the ability to ride out a surprise attack and retaliate overwhelmingly against Soviet cities. Their premise was that as long as the Russians were convinced of the American capability of "assured destruction," it did not really matter how many nuclear weapons they built or what kind since they would be deterred from initiating a nuclear strike.

A series of comprehensive studies has challenged the underlying premise of the doctrine.

A senior administration analyst said: "If current Soviet weapons trends continue, this will threaten to turn our assured-destruction doctrine on its head. It may not be able to deter for very much longer."

This then lies behind some of the growing impatience and skepticism that officials are expressing over the slowness of the United States-Soviet talks on a limitation of strategic weapons. It is also behind the speed of the Soviet missile build-up.

After consistent optimism, in public and private expressions, since the start of talks in Helsinki last November, many officials are becoming pessimistic.

Early Clue Awaited

A White House official suggests that unless the Russians come up with compromise proposals within two or three weeks after the talks resume next month, the United States may regard a meaningful settlement as rather elusive.

Last November, when the talks started on a hopeful note, the Russians were estimated to have 1,350 land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM's), in operation or under construction, and about 200 missiles aboard submarines.

Now the estimates have jumped to 1,500 ICBM's and 450 missiles on nuclear submarines, either operational or under construction. In addition, 100 or so missiles are believed mounted on older submarines.

By comparison, the United States has long maintained 1,000 Minuteman and 54 Titan-2 ICBM's, plus 656 Polaris missiles on submarines.

The strategists worry less about numerical comparisons than about the character and possible use of the weapons.

The American analysts have calculated that some 420 giant Soviet SS-9 missiles, carrying three five-megaton warheads each, could destroy 95 per cent of the Minutemen. The Russians have more than 300 SS-9's and are continuing to build.

The Russians have recently started testing a three-part warhead for the smaller SS-11 missile, of which there are more than 800 in the Soviet arsenal.

The Russians have also been gradually expanding the number of missile submarines on station off the East Coast and the officials expect them to deploy some off the West Coast fairly soon.

The American analysts also note that missiles fired from submarines offshore would provide only a few minutes warning time, threatening to catch B-52 bombers on the ground and to destroy key command centers, radar stations and communications links.

The concern then is that if the Russians could threaten a successful first strike against land-based weapons, the President would be faced with deciding whether to fire surviving Polaris missiles against Soviet cities, knowing the Russians could then wipe out American cities.

President Nixon expressed this worry in a paragraph buried in his 160-page State of the World message last February.

"Should a President, in the event of a nuclear attack, be left with the single option of ordering the mass destruction of enemy civilians, in the face of certainty that it would be followed by the mass slaughter of Americans?"

No senior American strategist suggests that the Russians, having achieved such a capability, would press the button. Rather they worry that the Russians might feel emboldened to pursue a more aggressive foreign policy, convinced that the United States would adjust to the new reality of the nuclear balance.

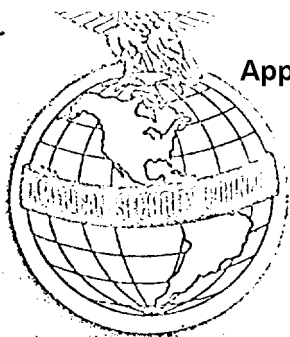
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WASHINGTON REPORT

Washington, September 28, 1970

WR 70-18

OPERATION ALERT

I. Purpose

The United States has become the *Number 2* power in strategic military strength. We are no longer first, but a fast-slipping second behind the Soviet Union.

This is the blunt warning now being mailed out to more than two million American voters, both Democrats and Republicans, and to some 3,000 civic organizations throughout the country by the American Security Council in the opening phase of its Operation Alert, a massive, nation-wide voter education program.

The Operation Alert report, released to the press on September 23rd, features the results of three newly completed ASC projects:

(1) An up-date of the Council's 1969 analysis of the strategic military balance. This shows a current missile megatonnage preponderance of 6 to 1 in favor of the U.S.S.R.

(2) The findings of a nation-wide public opinion survey involving some 115,600 participants. This clearly indicates that the great majority of Americans want the security of strategic superiority.

(3) The National Security Index ratings for every member of the present Congress. This takes into account the actual voting record of each member on ten key national security bills or amendments which came to a roll call vote in 1969 and 1970.

In addition to warning Americans that the U.S. is dangerously far behind the Soviet Union in strategic military power, the purposes of Operation Alert are to:

—Inform Congress and the Administration that the ASC's National Security Issues Poll shows that the bulk of the American people want their country to be Number 1.

—Urge all voters to make national security the priority issue in the November elections by studying the candidates' positions on this vital subject before they cast their ballots.

—Provide President Nixon with positive, tangible evidence that most voters want "Peace Through Strength" and will back him against the "disarmament lobby" in Congress in regaining military superiority over the Soviet Union.

II. The Strategic Military Balance

The Operation Alert report summarizes today's critical imbalance in strategic missile megatonnage in the following chart. These figures reinforce the grim assessment made by Secretary of Defense Laird in his speech to the Associated Press Annual Luncheon on April 20, 1970:

"Thus, in the space of five years—from 1965 to 1970... the Soviet Union has virtually quadrupled the total megatonnage in its strategic offensive force... In that same period the United States... reduced its megatonnage by more than 40%."

It also underlines the truth of the terse observation made by the House Armed Services Committee in their Military Procurement Authorization Report of April 24, 1970:

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 "There has not been an arms race; the Soviets have been running forward at full speed all by themselves."

STRATEGIC MILITARY BALANCE — U.S.S.R. VS. U.S.A.

September 1970

Delivery System	U.S.S.R.		U.S.A.	
	Delivery Vehicles	Megatonnage (approx.)	Delivery Vehicles	Megatonnage (approx.)
Early Model ICBM	220 SS-6s, SS-7s, SS-8s	1,100	54 Titans	270
Small ICBMs	800 SS-11s, SS-13s	800	1,000 Minutemen	1,000
Large ICBMs	300 SS-9s	7,500	0	0
Orbital Bombardment System and Fractional OBS	Developed, probably operational, number unknown	30-100 each	0	0
Sub Launched Ballistic Missiles	280 SSN-6s, Serbs and Sarks	200	656 Polaris	460
Sub Launched Cruise Missiles	300 Shaddocks	30	0	0
Intermediate and Medium Range Ballistic Missiles	700 SS-4s, SS-5s, and SS-14s	700	0	0
Heavy Bombers	200 Bisons and Bears	Variable	550 B-52s	Variable
Medium Bombers	700 Badgers and Blinders	Variable	0	0
Totals*	3,500	10,330	2,260	1,730

*(Megatonnage totals do not include Heavy or Medium Bomber payloads or Orbital Bombardment System Warheads.)

The Operation Alert report emphasizes that bad as this imbalance is, the actual situation is even worse. This is because the data used in the ASC's analysis are *peacetime* figures. Since U.S. policy clearly rejects the concept of a "first strike" on our part the more realistic measure of our true strategic power would be that which might be remaining after a Soviet first strike. Based on what is known about current Soviet nuclear missile inventories and production rates, the U.S. would be fortunate to have from 20% to 50% of its strategic missile force remaining operational after a Russian surprise attack.

III. The National Security Issues Poll

The American Security Council believes that in a true democracy, decisions on such vital matters as military preparedness should reflect the will of the people. Today the key question—which in the final analysis must be answered at the ballot box—is, "Does the trend toward unilateral disarmament represent the will of most Americans or the will of special interest pressure groups?"

question, the ASC conducted a National Security Issues Poll

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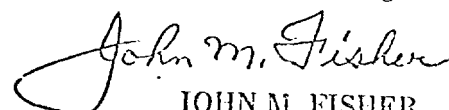
To do this, the ASC has published the Operation Alert Security Index. This compares the actual voting record of each Senator and Congressman on ten key national security bills or amendments with the National Voter Advisory Board's positions on these ten legislative actions as determined by the National Security Issues Poll.

Twenty-eight Senators are listed in the Operation Alert report as receiving a National Security Index of 100%. Of these, seven are up for re-election: Dodd, Fannin, Fong, Hruska, Murphy, Scott and Stennis.

Eighteen Senators received a zero rating, including the following six who are running for re-election: Goodell, Hart, Kennedy, Proxmire, Tydings and Williams (N.J.).

The Operation Alert is that the coming November elections could be decisive in determining the future of U.S. security. If more effort is not devoted to correcting the present strategic military *imbalance*, we may never be able to overcome the Soviet's lead and become Number 1 again.

Operation Alert seeks to present the facts. It is up to you, the voter, to decide whether or not you want to pass on to your children the security of military superiority and the confidence that comes from Peace Through Strength.


JOHN M. FISHER,
President

It is of interest that 45% of the U.S. Senators up for re-election scored 33 or less.

In many cases the voter has a clear choice on national security issues. For example in these U.S. Senate races:

State	Candidates and their National Security Index			
California	Murphy (R)	100%	Tunney (D)	0%
Indiana	Roudebush (R)	100%	Hartke (D)	10%
Maryland	Beall (R)	100%	Tydings (D)	0%
North Dakota	Kleppe (R)	100%	Burdick (D)	30%
Tennessee	Brock (R)	100%	Gore (D)	33%

Copies of the full Operation Alert report are available at 10 for \$1.00 from either address below.

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between March 1 and August 31, 1970. The results, based on replies received from 115,599 participants, are shown in the following table:

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	AGREE %			DISAGREE %			UNDECIDED %		
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
1. The Safeguard anti-ballistic missile defense system (ABM) is necessary for the defense of the United States.	93.19	78.53	80.39	1.26	11.47	10.53	5.55	10.00	9.03
2. The United States should maintain military strength greater than that of the Soviet Union and Red China.	93.53	82.07	84.75	2.07	10.73	9.85	4.40	7.20	5.40
3. Communists and other revolutionaries should be permitted to teach in tax-supported educational institutions.	1.20	9.69	4.79	97.77	88.28	92.66	1.03	2.03	2.55
4. Communists and other revolutionaries should be permitted to hold sensitive positions in defense facilities.	.58	4.78	1.32	99.00	93.05	96.04	.42	2.17	2.64
5. The United States should have a national objective of victory in the cold war.	93.46	80.64	80.04	2.47	11.09	11.53	4.07	8.27	8.43
6. The United States needs a "Freedom Academy" to train leaders for new forms of nonmilitary conflict.	73.09	56.91	47.25	6.61	16.40	26.40	20.30	26.63	26.35
7. The U.S. should help the people of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Cuba and other captive nations in their struggle for freedom.	71.95	57.10	52.97	9.85	20.80	28.48	18.20	22.10	18.55
8. The United States should have a national objective of victory in Vietnam.	89.85	76.77	78.16	3.18	13.70	14.03	6.97	9.53	7.75
9. The United States should give economic aid to foreign governments even if they are Communist or pro-Communist.	2.07	8.87	5.41	93.05	85.57	89.99	4.88	5.56	4.60
10. The United States should extend diplomatic recognition to Red China.	10.27	20.85	21.74	76.35	66.55	66.88	13.38	12.60	11.38

Category A lists the results from 42,946 members of the National Voter Advisory Board, made up of opinion leaders representing the full range of domestic political viewpoint.

Category B summarizes the responses from 45,456 who participated in the Poll, but did not become members of the Advisory Board.

Category C consists of replies sent in by 27,197 readers of 203 newspapers in 44 states. These papers, ranging in size from the St. Louis Globe Democrat and the San Francisco Examiner to small local papers, published the Poll questions as a public service.

The range of results from these three different categories on three of the poll questions is particularly interesting in view of the distorted impression one gets of public opinion from some of the news media. Specifically:

—From 82.07% to 93.53% believe the U.S. should maintain military strength "greater than that of the Soviet Union and Red China."

—From 76.77% to 89.85% feel that this country "should have a national objective of victory in Vietnam."

—From 78.53% to 93.19% consider the Safeguard ABM System "necessary for the defense of the United States."

IV. The National Security Index

For democracy to work, the voter must know where the candidates stand. Thus an essential element of the Operation Alert voter education program is to report on the national security voting record of each member of Congress.

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